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Aint I A Woman?

a midwest newspaper of women's liberation

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let's not blow it

I hope this can stir up a little thought as well as reaction.

If anyone writes you a reply I'd like to read it and will answer any and keep the dialogue going if you want. This is something that I think W.L. needs. I'm involved in reading Marx in German and Lenin in Russian right no and find that there are many interesting writings not available in English.

Dear sisters:

Going against a fad is asking for trouble, and there is no greater fad in the Movement than Marxist-Leninism, as it is popularly understood. My readings lately of Marx have shown little in common with street-Marxism's preaching. He is more human, more flexible. He is a social philosopher in a certain tradition of 19th Century Europe. I don't know much first hand about Lenin, but wonder if he is also saying something quite different than what the U.S. version says. In any case, the contemporary U.S. style of Marxist-Leninism has little to offer Women's Lib. I see three main drawbacks:

1) In the area of individual freedom. In the M.-L.'s system, in order to insure an equitable division of the goods of society, the state takes the goods in the name of the People and doles them out as the state sees fit. The same is to be done with freedoms. The state has them all, the individual has none he or she can call his/her own, no rights. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat does not mean political power for each person but rather, absolute power for the state which acts, in theory anyhow, in behalf of the People. (Who presumably, then, are incapable of the right use of power, like minors and incompetants. A very 19th Century European idea.) Of the nations which have long been seriously and officially committed to the Communist ideal, why have none of them moved past the stage of ruthless repression? Marx felt it would take only one generation. It has been almost three. The State has not "withered away". Where is the new freedom? the new age?

2) A naturalistic-historical determinism means bondage for women. If humankind cannot transcend or reject its "nature", then men are bound to fight and kill, and women to the hearth and cradle. Sartre and other existentialists have said that mankind has no "nature" except what we choose and make for ourselves. (Ironical that Sartre, having perceived man's radical freedom, opts for the certainties of orthodox, stodgy French Communism.) All "back to nature" philosophies, no matter how they may construe nature, mean bondage for humans. If we disparage our inner life, our humanity, creativeness, intellect, then we are left with our nature as higher animals, society becomes Dostoevshii's antheap, becomes 1984, and we are stuck with our natural "function" of childbearing, etc.

3) The "Marxist-Leninist" segment of the current American Revolution is heavy with the foul air of the Macho posture. The women who follow these male revolutionaries are part camp-follower and part groupy. Women's Lib seems to be conscious of this problem, and tries to make our own style of revolution, without the domineering and violent power hangups men suffer from. However there seems to be an inclination simply to mimic the macho left on a separate-but-equal basis, without the originality or force of ideas to create a new synthesis. We are in danger of simply adopting the chic revolutionary stance and style, the floppy gaudy bra-less soft costume of a waning hippy-culture's "girlfriends", and the mindless slogans of hate and resentment - when what is needed is self-respect, clear-minded love and toil for the real revolution in our very real world. We must be hard as diamonds, mentally and physically - as Nietzsche has said, "All creators are hard". Our time is now, let's make it, let's not blow it.

I hope, sisters, that you will do some thinking on this stuff and write some reactions. Wherever possible, read Marx and Lenin in German and Russian if you can, and avoid "selections" and secondary sources. We need to find out what they and other philosophers of the revolution really said. It's time we all saw that in this real revolution the intellectual task is everybody's task, to hammer out a new synthesis of old ideas. Don't leave this, too, to the men - or we'll be back in the kitchen when the new age dawns.

Love & Peace

Margaret Hood

I would like to leave this to the men, which is to say leave it-for we really haven't yet. We still frantically attempt to fit in those pieces of our experience which the theories have never been based on. Let's shuck it. Your delving has not led you where my experience has led me. I am no longer concerned with the nature of "mankind" --I am concerned with women. I am concerned that the conventions we have followed are quite arbitrary - that they can be cast aside and we will have to determine what conventions we will follow. Even those conventions will or should be changed when and if they hurt us. I have never been able to figure out what the fuck existentialism meant but I sure as hell figured out what the term "mankind" meant. What do I care about "Sartre, having percieved man's radical freedom". More importantly, what do you care? The intelligentsia you have entered has always been male dominated and sexist and your polemic displays that. It is written by a woman but it is written in the sexist rhetoric of men and I wish you would think more of that than of Marx and Lenin.

I do not see any current American Revolution. I can't understand that at all. I see many oppressed groups - Blacks, Women, Chicanas beginning to answer and analyze their oppression. What the hell is the current American Revolution - how is it defined? I have only heard about it when men request we work with them on some project and that if we don't we are divorcing ourselves from the current American Revolution which I quess must be their project.

P.S. Why do you abbreviate liberation. You don't say the Current American Rev.

P.P.S. Can I not have self-respect in a floppy gaudy bra-less costume?

SOJOURNER TRUTH,
"THE LIBYAN SIBYL."

"That man over there say that a woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helped me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me a best place... And ain't I a women? Look at me. Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me... And ain't I a women? I could work as much and eat as much as a man when I could get it, and bear the lash as well... And ain't I a woman? I have borned thirteen children and seen them most all sold off into slavery. And when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard... And ain't I a woman?"

Sojurner Truth: Speech before the Woman's Rights Convention at Akron, Ohio in 1851.

The state also acts at the request of the people; the people have local community power. Example: Castro's offer to communities in need of housing to have the state supply pre-fab material to the people who will decide on their use and construction.

The idea of a highly centralized government controlling a mass society is not conducive to faith in that government. Communism is communal, "grass roots" based, isn't it? The best examples of communism have been in smaller societies than Russia or China.

Conclusion: The "new synthesis of old ideas" can also teach how to apply some old syntheses to (what may be) new ideas. When a situation is straying from a defined Marxist-Leninist structure we must consider which should guide us: theory or the demands of the people at that time. The Revolution serves people; it is not being constructed from theory as a model for its own sake.

GETTING IT

TOGETHER

WE get it together in small groups. The New People's group of WLF gathers on Wednesday night at 9 P.M. Call us at 337-4398 for where, who, why or any thing we could enlighten you about.

The Action Studies Office has women's literature in their library for your use in Room 301, Jefferson Bldg.

There are books, pamphlets, underground papers, free leaflets, & this paper.

personal to political
views from new sisters

Betty Friedan couldn't tell me; Marlene Dixon couldn't tell me; my favorite neighbor, who was in Women's Liberation, couldn't tell me; it took my own explosion against the powerlessness I felt as a woman to push me into doing something about my own and my sisters' liberation. What I wanted at first was to be heard and understood and to get this chain off my cradle-to-grave "identity".

I got a lot more than I expected. My sisters were more than just nominally that. They were aware, articulate, and angry. (Shoot down my "other-women -are-stupid" stereotype.) For the most part, they were not competitive nor Personal-power-seeking; although I consider myself worth listening to, I have never been heard as attentively as by the women in the Iowa City Women's Liberation front. Age and special interests cease to be barriers. Rarely has analysis become dogmatic; everything is subject to question, including what we thought yesterday. I have never felt so together with a group of people in my life.

It's tough to make any changes in your own life and it's extraordinarily difficult to do it when it involves making demands on other people -- especially a man you might be close to. You can't even do <u>that</u> by yourself, much less change the whole system, alone. You gotta have <u>sisters</u> for both of those. And that is how you begin.

Coming into a new people's group is like discovering a sanctuary. The absence of male-type influence means to me that we'll be free of some of the games people play.

It doesn't take long to relax into the group even though you don't know the other women. We're all here under the same conditions. These words have brought us together: Women....Liberation. Each of us is a woman; each of us has a personal interest in liberation. Each women's opinion is what we are hearing. A first-timer, a high school student is rapping... her words come slowly at first, deep feelings rising to the surface... then someone nods yes, me too...confidence increases and she finds herself more articulate and more people flash yes, I know, I've been there too...soon we see we've all been there. Are our problems really personal when so many of us have the same problems, the same frustrations, even the same words?

I have been annoyed, thwarted, hurt by individuals who these women have never seen; yet they have suffered the same injustices. Maybe those who hurt me would have hurt my sisters in the group for I am"just a woman" too. Imagine just what would be insulting to any woman. Isn't that insult common? It's ---oppression, that's what it is. We must push back oppression , all together. We all feel it and our unity gives each of us its strength. Now we know we want to do something as we are together more often we'll **find what we want that something to be.**

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"What Security?"
SHE Said

These are a series of photos from the women's strike on August 26th in New York. We had just arrived at the Social Security building at Federal Plaza to speak to some officials about the fact that women lost most of their own social security benefits when they married (instead getting part of their husbands). If for example you have worked 5 years, earning less than what your husband did - when you marry you lose the benefits of those years (that you have paid out) & instead are entitled to a share of your husbands benefits.

When the pigs saw us coming with our signs they locked all the doors to the Federal Building refusing us entrance and locking out some of their own employees as well. They let the media in who were photographing us from inside. Betty Friedan arrived and at once they told her <u>she</u> could come in with 10 women. We demanded all of us in. When 10 of us did get in they shut the doors. We turned and demanded they let the rest of the women in at which point two pigs came and forcibly threw 2 of us out. Until a woman is allowed **equal** benefits she should refuse to pay any taxes to a system **that** exploits her labor.

lest we begin to oink

As we grow in size--as our movement becomes older--our vision of what we want expands and the projects we commit ourselves to increase. There is so much we must do that we find ourselves looking for efficient and reliable ways to get it all done.

It is not surprising that the things we choose as efficient ways of working too often reflect the bureaucratic individual business-like pigshit we have been brought up in or the male-dominated counter left some of us are refugees from. To learn to work collectively we may have to sacrefice much efficiency and that is a difficult thing to sacrifice when we frantically want to struggle to win. None the less we must struggle in ways that enrich and spur growth in our movement, not ways that bureaucratize and stagnate us. We should be concerned about appearing as a group against the system, not a group that looks like part of it. We cannot afford to not question such actions as incorporating, applying for mailing permits that require a subscription list be supplied to the government, or hiring full-time staff people.

For example, hiring full-time staff puts certain women in a position to know more about what's going on in the group than other women--no matter how hard the staff tries to avoid this. The staff can afford to be at the office all the time because they are paid while the other women who may be equally committed have to work full-time at jobs they hate or who have children to take care of. Staff people are generally hired at least partially for their ability to run an office or make public contacts--an ability many women don't have because they have not had the privilege to develop that ability. The staff may be willing to teach others, but those others will not be paid to learn and can often not afford the time if they have to work to earn.

I would imagine most staff hired for Women's Liberation offices would be middle or upper class. I might be wrong. They might be the few working class women in the organization, but that wouldn't be any better because it would perpetuate their position of shit-worker. If there is typing to be done everyone should do it. So a lot of middle-class, college educated women in Women's Liberation, who have missed the joy of high school "office skill" better learn to type.

In Iowa City we have tried to work out collectively this getting-the-work-done problem. We certainly don't claim complete success, but the sacrifices in efficiency seem justifiable in terms of what we have gained in collective consciousness and responsibility. We have tried to rotate office work monthly to a group consisting of one person from each small collective. Often the work just hasn't gotten done, but we maintain that if the work to be done is decided on collectively (which it should be), it should be done collectively.

Some of us (8) also live together and pool our money which allows some to not work (system jobs) and work on Women's Liberation projects. Some of us work in the day care centers half-time. Something not possible for all of those who do without some kind of pooling of resources. The day care centers offer free time to those women at home with young children.

Women who are married and/or who work cannot take advantage of the privilege of living collectively with other Women's Liberation women and mixed communes can rarely be expected to give financial or time priority to Women's Liberation work. But there are some possibilities that could be tried. Jobs can be split into shifts done collectively so several women with little time can participate. Pooling resources so women who badly need the money they get from employers they hate can work for a period of time on Women's Liberation activities instead.

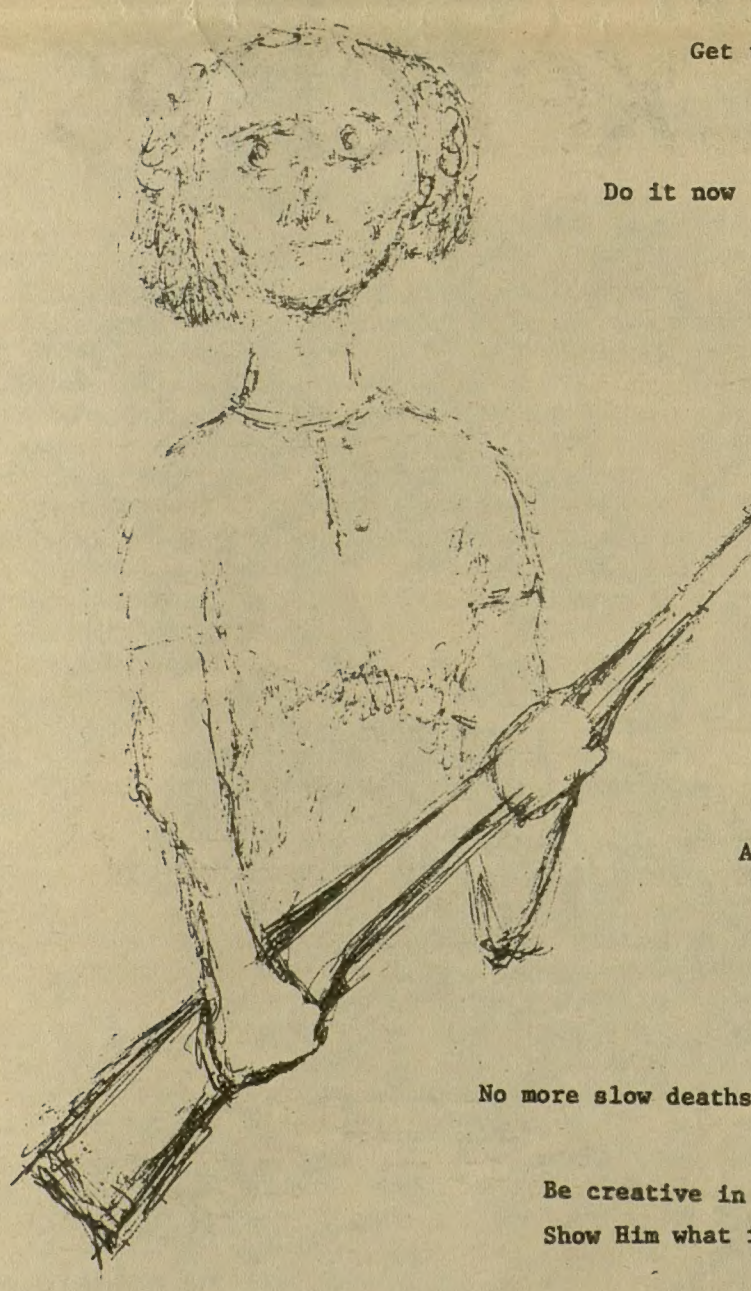
THESE ARE NOT SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM-REVOLUTION IS. But we must avoid bringing about a revolution like corporate businessmen (which could probably not be done anyway).

We so often forget to check our thoughts for their pigshit content. Some of us decided we should try to fund someone to go to Cuba. Wanting to be fair, we thought we would draw from the names of all those who want to go. But that is only fair to those women who can afford the time. It does not answer the problem of some married women, or women with children or women with jobs they need (what employer would give you time off to go to Cuba).

We cannot oink our way to revolutionary victory.

---

anonymous poem



Don't demonstrate

Get together in small conspiracies, cells,

women you can trust

Do it now

The Man is swarming all over the city

Use your invisibility - in kitchens, bedrooms, offices, streets

Purge Him from your head
Be ready for His blow
Beware his oinking about pigs

Recognize the face of sexist hate

Watch out for The Man in need of underground auxiliaries

Guard against panics that turn the key in the wedlock

Abstractions are His game

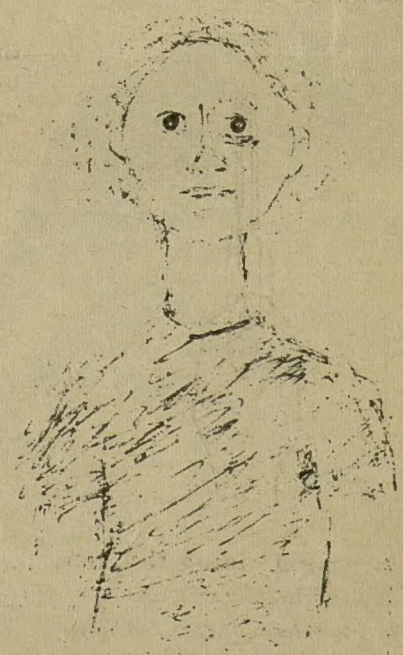
Pain is real
No more halves of nothing
Take everything

No more slow deaths or waiting til after...

Be creative in your anger
Show Him what it means to make chaos the rule

Try Him for contempt of our lives

Make new definitions, new conjunctions, new worlds



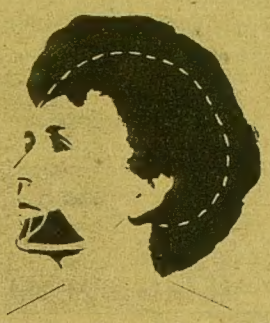
WOMEN ARE THE PEOPLE

Miss Craig's Face-Saving Exercises

Muscles used: mouth corners to cheekbones (5), along sides of nose (6), sides of face (7).

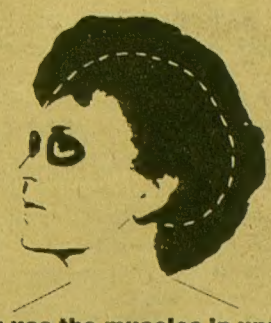
Muscles used lie above upper lip (8), below lower lip (9), and encircle mouth (10).

Many muscles of the chin and the neck are involved in the chin-up exercise shown below (14).



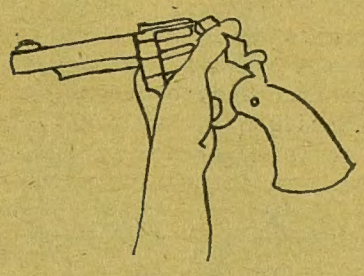
Muscles used are at tip and sides of chin (11, 12) and below lower corners of the mouth (13).

These exercises use muscles in forehead and scalp (1) and at medial end of eyebrows (2).

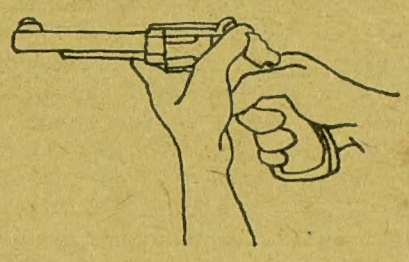


You use the muscles in upper and lower eyelids (3), as well as those encircling the eyes (4).

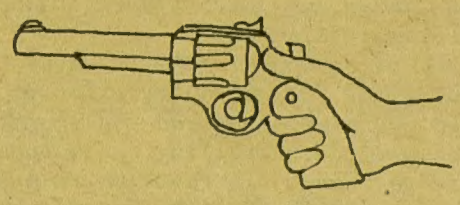
Ain't I a Woman's Face-saving Exercises



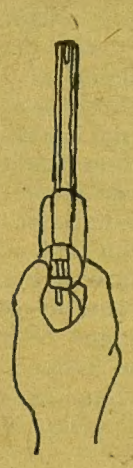
The importance of the hand position on the grip of a pistol cannot be overemphasized.
The hand should be as high on the grip as is allowed by the rear extension of the hammer spur of the revolver.
The gun is cradled under the trigger guard in the left hand. The hammer should be drawn back to the full cock position with the right thumb.



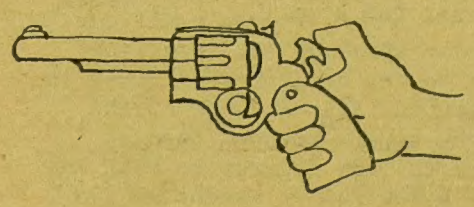
The left thumb should then be placed between the hammer and the frame to prevent accidental firing. The "V" formed by the right thumb and the first finger is then fitted as high as possible on the grip.
The heel of the hand is solidly behind the grip so gun will recoil straight back.



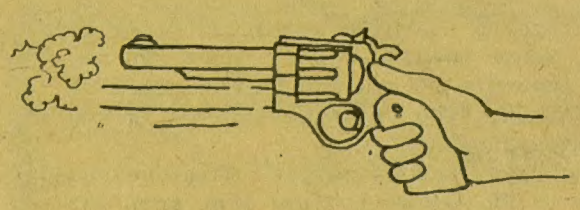
The first finger should be placed on the trigger almost up to the first joint.
The left thumb stays between hammer and frame until the gun is extended for firing.



After extending the gun, the right thumb rests along the frame on top of the cylinder latch.



While the cocking motion is going on the pistol is being brought back to aiming position.



If held correctly the pistol will recoil almost straight up and will stay in line with the target.

GOOD

So. RAT has been liberated, for this week at least. Next week? If the men return to reinstate the porny photos, the sexist comic strips, the "nude-chickie" covers (along with their patronizing rhetoric about being in favor of Women's Liberation) - if this happens, our alternatives are clear. RAT must be taken over permanently by women - or RAT must be destroyed.

Why RAT? Why not EVO or even the obvious new pornzines (Mafia-distributed alongside the human pornography of prostitution)? First, they'll get theirs - but it won't be a takeover, which is reserved for something at least worth taking over. Nor should they be censored. They should just be helped not to exist - by any means necessary. But RAT, which has always tried to be a really radical cum life-style paper - that's another matter. It's the liberal co-optative masks on the face of sexist hate and fear, worn by real nice guys we all know and like, right? We have met the enemy and he's our friend. And dangerous. "What the hell, let the chicks do an issue; maybe it'll satisfy 'em for a while, it's a good controversy, and it'll maybe sell papers" - runs an unheard conversation that I'm sure took place at some point last week.

And that's what I wanted to write about - the friends, brothers, lovers in the counterfeit male-dominated Left. The good guys who think they know what "Women's Lib," as they so chummily call it, is all about - and who then proceed to degrade and destroy women by almost everything they say and do: The cover on the last issue of RAT (front and back). The token "pussy power" or "clit militancy" articles. The snide descriptions of women staffers on the masthead. The little jokes, the personal ads, the smile, the snarl. No more, brothers. No more well-meaning ignorance, no more assuming that this thing we're all fighting for is the same: one revolution under man, with liberty and justice for all. No more.

Let's run it on down. White males are most responsible for the destruction of human life and environment on the planet today. Yet who is controlling the supposed revolution to change all that? White males (yes, yes, even with their pasty fingers back in black and brown pies again). It just could make one a bit uneasy. It seems obvious that a legitimate revolution must be led by, made by those who have been most oppressed: black, brown, and white women - with men relating to that the best they can. A genuine Left doesn't consider anyone's suffering irrelevant or titillating; nor does it function as a microcosm of capitalist economy, with men competing for power and status at the top, and women doing all the work at the bottom (and functioning as objectified prizes or "coin" as well). Goodby to all that.

Run it all the way down.

Goodbye to the male-dominated peace movement, where sweet old Uncle Dave can say with impunity to a woman on the staff of LIBERATION, "The trouble with you is you're an aggressive woman."

Goodbye to the "straight" male-dominated Left: to PL who will allow that some workers are women, but won't see all women, (say, housewives) as workers (just like the System itself); to all the old Leftover parties who offer their "Women's Liberation caucuses" to us as if that were not a contradiction in terms; to the individual anti-leadership leaders who hand-pick certain women to be leaders and then relate only to them, either in the male Left or in Women's Liberation - bringing their hang-ups about power-dominance and manipulation to everything they touch.

Goodbye to the WeatherVain, with the Stanley Kowalski image and theory of free sexuality but practice of sex on demand for males. "Left Out!" - not Right On - to the Weather Sisters who, and they know better - they know, reject their own radical feminism for that last desperate grab at male approval, for claiming that the machismo style and the gratuitous violence is their own style by "free choice" and for believing that this is the way for a woman to make her revolution...all the while, oh my sister, not meeting my eyes because WeatherMen chose Manson as their - and your - Hero. (Honest, at least...since

BYE

Manson is only the logical extreme of the normal American male's fantasy (whether he is Dick Nixon or Mark Rudd): master of a harem, women to do all the shitwork, from raising babies and cooking and hustling to killing people on order.) Goodbye to all that shit that sets women apart from women; shit that covers the face of any Weatherwoman which is the face of any Manson Slave which is the face of Sharon Tate which is the face of Mary Jo Kopechne which is the face of Beulah Saunders which is the face of me which is the face of Pat Nixon which is the face of Pat Swinton. In the dark we are all the same - and you better believe it: we're in the dark, baby. (Remember the old joke: Know what they call a black man with a Ph.D.? A nigger. Variation: Know what they call a Weatherwoman? A heavy cunt. Know what they call a Hip Revolutionary Woman? A groovy cunt. Know what they call a radical militant feminist? A crazy cunt. Amerika is a land of free choice - take your pick of titles. Left Out, my Sister - don't you see? Goodbye to the illusion of strength when you run hand in hand with your oppressors; goodby to the dream that being in the leadership collective will get you anything but gonorrhea.

Goodbye to RYM II, as well, and all the other RYMs - not that the sisters there didn't pull a cool number by seizing control, but because they let the men back in after only a day or so of self-criticism on male chauvinism. (And goodbye to the inaccurate blanket use of that phrase, for that matter: male chauvinism is an attitude - male supremacy is the objective reality, the fact.) Goodbye to the Conspiracy who, when lunching with fellow sexist bastards Norman Mailer and Terry Southern in a bunny-type club in Chicago, found Judge Hoffman at the neighboring table - no surprise: in the light they are all the same.

Goodbye to Hip Culture and the so-called Sexual Revolution, which has functioned toward women's freedom as did the Reconstruction toward former slaves - reinstituted oppression by another name. Goodbye to the assumption that Hugh Romney is safe in his "cultural revolution," safe enough to refer to "our women, who make all our clothes" without somebody not forgiving that. Goodbye to the arrogance of power indeed that lets Czar Stan Freeman of the Electric Circus sleep without fear at night, or permits Tomi Ungerer to walk unafraid in the street after executing the drawings for the Circus advertising campaign against women. Goodbye to the idea that Hugh Hefner is groovy 'cause he lets Conspirators come to parties at the Mansion - goodbye to Hefner's dream of a ripe old age. Goodbye to Tuli and the Fugs and all the boys in the front room - who always knew they hated the women they loved. Goodbye to the notion that good ol' Abbie is any different from any other up and coming movie star (like, say Cliff Robertson) who ditches the first wife and kids, good enough for the old days but awkward once you're Making It. Goodbye to his hypocritical double standard that reeks through all the tattered charm. Goodbye to lovely pro-Women's-Liberation Paul Krassner, with all his astonished anger that women have lost their sense of humor "on this issue" and don't laugh anymore at the little funnies that degrade and hurt them; farewell to the memory of his "Instant Pussy" aerosol-can poster, to his column for Cavalier, to his dream of a Rape-in against legislator's wives, to his Scapegoats and Realist Nuns and cute anecdotes about the little daughter he sees as often as any proper divorced Scarsdale middle-aged (38) father; goodbye forever to the notion that he is my brother, who, like Paul, buys a prostitute for the night as a birthday gift for a male friend, or who, like Paul, reels off the names in alphabetical order of people in the Women's Movement he has fucked, reels off names in the best locker-room tradition -- as proof that he's no sexist oppressor.

Let it all hang out. Let it seem bitchy, catty, dykey, frustrated, crazy, Solanisesque, nutty, frigid, ridiculous, bitter, embarrassing, man-hating, libelous pure, unfair, envious, intuitive, low-down, stupid, petty, liberating. We are the women that men have warned us about.

TO

And let's put one lie to rest for all time: the lie that men are oppressed, too, by sexism -- the lie that there can be such a thing as "men's liberation groups." Oppression is something that one group of people commits against another group specifically because of a "threatening" characteristic shared by the latter group--skin color or sex or age, etc. The oppressors are indeed fucked up by being masters (racism hurts whites, sexual stereotypes are harmful to men) but those masters are not oppressed. Any master has the alternative of divesting himself of sexism or racism -- the oppressed have no alternative --for they have no power -- but to fight. In the long run, Women's Liberation will of course free men -- but in the short run it's going to cost men a lot of privilege, which no one gives up willingly or easily. Sexism is not the fault of women -- kill your fathers, not your mothers.

Run it on down. Goodbye to a beautiful new ecology movement that could fight to save us all if it would stop tripping off women as earth-mother types or frontier chicks, if it would right now cede leadership to those who have not polluted the planet because that action implies power and women haven't had any power in about 5,000 years, cede leadership to those whose brains are as tough and clear as any man's but whose bodies are also unavoidably aware of the locked-in relationship between humans and their biosphere -- the earth, the tides, the atmosphere, the moon. Ecology is no big shtick if you're a woman -- it's always been there.

Goodbye to the complicity inherent in the Berkeley Tribesman being part publishers of Trashman Comics; goodbye, for that matter, to the reasoning that finds whoremaster Trashman a fitting model,

however comic-strip far out, for a revolutionary man -- somehow related to the same Supermale reasoning that permits the first statement on Women's Liberation and male chauvinism that came out of the Black Panther Party to be made by a man, talkin' a whole lot 'bout how the Sisters should speak up for themselves. Such ignorance and arrogance ill befits a revolutionary.

We know how racism is worked deep into the unconscious by our System -- the same way sexism is, as it appears in the very name of The Young Lords. What are you if you're a "macho woman" -- a female Lord? Or, god forbid, a Young Lady? Change it, change it to The Young Gentry, if you must, or never assume that the name itself is innocent of pain, of oppression.

Theory and practice and the light years between them. "Do it!" says Jerry Rubin in Rat's last issue -- but he doesn't, or every Rat reader would have known the pictured face next to his article as well as they know his own much-photographed face: it was Nancy Kurshan, the power behind the clown.

Goodbye to the New Nation and Earth People's Park, for that matter, conceived by men, announced by men, led by men -- doomed before its birth by the rotting seeds of male supremacy which are to be transplanted in fresh soil. Was it my brother who listed human beings among the objects which would be easily available after the Revolution: "Free grass, free food, free women, free acid, free clothes, etc."? Was it my brother who wrote, "Fuck your women till they can't stand up" and said that groupies were liberated chicks 'cause they dug a titshake instead of a handshake? The epitome of female exclusionism -- "men will make the Revolution and their chicks." Not my brother, no. Not my revolution. Not one breath of my support for the new counterleft Christ -- John Sinclair. Just one less to worry about for ten years. I do not choose my enemy for my brother.

Goodbye, goodbye. The hell with the simplistic notion that automatic freedom for women -- or non-white peoples -- will come about ZAP! with the advent of a

ALL

socialist revolution. Bullshit. Two evils pre-date capitalism and have been clearly able to survive and post-date socialism: sexism and racism. Women were the first property when the Primary Contradiction occurred: when one half of the human species decided to subjugate the other half, because it was "different", alien, the Other. From there it was an easy step to extend the Other to someone of different skin shade, different height or weight or language -- or strength to resist. Goodbye to those simple-minded optimistic dreams of socialist equality all our good socialist brothers want us to believe. How liberal a politics that is! How much further we will have to go to create those profound changes that would give birth to a genderless society. Profound, Sister. Beyond what is male or female. Beyond standards we all adhere to now without daring to examine them as male-created, male-dominated, male-fucked-up, and in male self-interest. Beyond all known standards, especially those easily articulated revolutionary ones we all rhetorically invoke. Beyond, to a species with a new name, that would not dare define itself as Man.

I once said, "I'm a revolutionary, not just a woman," and knew my own lie even as I said the words. The pity of that statement's eagerness to be acceptable to those whose revolutionary zeal no one would question, i.e., any male supremacist in the counterleft. But to become a true revolutionary one must first become one of the oppressed (not organize or educate or manipulate them, but become one of them) or realize that you are one of them already. No woman wants that. Because that realization is humiliating, it hurts. It hurts to understand that at Woodstock or Altamont a woman could be declared uptight or a poor sport if she didn't want to be raped. It hurts to learn that the Sisters still in male-Left captivity are putting down the crazy feminists to make themselves look okay and unthreatening to our mutual oppressors. It hurts to be pawns in those games. It hurts to try and change each day of your life right now -- not in talk, not "in your head," and not only conveniently "out there" in the Third World (half of which is women) or the black and brown communities (half of which are women) but in your own home, kitchen, bed. No getting away, not matter how else you are oppressed, from the primary oppression of being female in a patriarchal world. It hurts to hear that the Sisters in the Gay Liberation Front, too, have to struggle continually against the male chauvinism of their gay brothers. It hurts that Jane Alpert was cheered when rapping about imperialism, racism, the Third World, and All Those Safe Topics but hissed and booed by a Movement crowd of men who wanted none of it when she began to talk about Women's Liberation. The backlash is upon us.

They tell us the alternative is to hang in there and "struggle", to confront male domination in the counterleft, to fight beside or behind or beneath our brothers -- to show 'em we're just as tough, just as revolushunerry, just as whatever-image-they-now-want-of-us-as-once-they-wanted-us-to-be-feminine-and-keep-the-home-fire-burning. They will bestow titular leadership on our grateful shoulders, whether it's being a token woman on the Movement Speakers Bureau Advisory Board, or being a Conspiracy groupie or one of the "respectable" chain-swinging Motor City Nine. Sisters all, with only one real alternative: to seize our own power into our own hands, all women, separate and together, and make the Revolution the way it must be made -- no priorities this time, no suffering group told to wait until after.

It is the job of revolutionary feminists to build an ever stronger independent Women's Liberation Movement, so that the Sisters in counterleft captivity will have somewhere to turn, to use their power and rage and beauty and coolness in

THAT

their own behalf for once, on their own terms, on their own issues, in their own style -- whatever that may be. Not for us in Women's Liberation to hassle them and confront them the way their men do, nor to blame them -- or ourselves -- for what any of us are: an oppressed people, but a people raising our consciousness toward something that is the other side of anger, something bright and smooth and cool, like action unlike anything yet contemplated or carried out. It is for us to survive (something the white male radical has the luxury of never really worrying about, what with all his options), to talk, to plan, to be patient, to welcome new fugitives from the counterfeit Left with no arrogance but only humility and delight to plan, to push -- to strike.

There is something every woman wears around her neck on a thin chain of fear -- an amulet of madness. For each of us, there exists somewhere a moment of insult so intense that she will reach up and rip the amulet off, even if the chain tears at the flesh of her neck. And the last protection from seeing the truth will be gone. Do you think, tugging furtively every day at the chain and going nicely insane as I am, that I can be concerned with the puerile squabbles of a counterfeit Left that laughs at my pain? Do you think such a concern is noticeable when set alongside the suffering of more than half the human species for the past 5,000 years -- due to a whim of the other half? No, no, no, goodbye to all that.

Women are Something Else. This time, we're going to kick out all the jams, and the boys will just have to hustle to keep up, or else drop out and openly join the power structure of which they are already the illegitimate sons. Any man who claims he is serious about wanting to divest himself of cock privilege should trip on this: all male leadership out of the Left is the only way; and it's going to happen, whether through men stepping down or through women seizing the helm. It's up to the "brothers" -- after all, sexism is their concern, not ours; we're too busy getting ourselves together to have to deal with their bigotry. So they'll have to make up their own minds as to whether they will be divested of just cock privilege or -- what the hell, why not say it? -- divested of cocks. How deep the fear of that loss must be, that it can be suppressed only by the building of empires and the waging of genocidal wars!

Goodbye, goodbye forever, counterfeit Left, counterleft, male-dominated cracked-glass-mirror reflection of the Amerikan Nightmare. Women are the real Left. We are rising, powerful in our unclean bodies; bright glowing mad in our inferior brains; wild hair flying, wild eyes staring, wild voices keening; undaunted by blood we who hemorrhage every twenty-eight days; laughing at our own beauty we who have lost our sense of humor; mourning for all each precious one of us might have been in this one living time-place had she not been born a woman; stuffing fingers into our mouths to stop the screams of fear and hate and pity for men we have loved and love still; tears in our eyes and bitterness in our mouths for children we couldn't have, or couldn't not have, or didn't want, or didn't want yet, or wanted and had in this place and this time of horror. We are rising with a fury older and potentially greater than any force in history, and this time we will be free or no one will survive. Power to all the people or to none. All the way down, this time.

FREE OUR SISTERS! FREE OURSELVES!

by Robin Morgan

Reprinted from RAT

insane, in GRain, in vain, in pain

Innate qualities we have in common are surfacing in the process of our movement's growth. Growth sometimes has turmoil, disruption, diffusion, ...

Insane, in grain, in vain, in pain, despair, repair, unfair, despair

After my journey west, I'm happy to be living in Iowa City, Iowa and not in San Francisco or Omaha or Berkeley because I'd be frustrated working there in our movement after all we're doing in I.C., and I wouldn't be nearly as far ideologically if I'd never lived in Iowa City.

I'm supposed to write something about my impressions of our movement in SF and Berkeley and Omaha after spending several weeks with sisters there. And you'd think I could. And I'd think I could, too, because I got a lot of impressions and have reached several conclusions about the movement there: as compared to the midwest and Iowa City, just the movement there, sisterhood, politics. But I'm finding it extremely difficult.

Since I'm going to be writing this for our midwest readers, I guess a comparison might be all right, though sisters on the coast won't believe or give credit to my impressions because regional elitism exists--and as strongly as ever.

To meet the needs of women must remain a primary task in our movement. I don't want to see any women ignored and neglected. Something that made me very uncomfortable on my trip (and I saw when I returned to I.C.) is how some of us are getting so involved with the movement in our area. I mean the menial, necessary tasks of providing a center for exchange of information and communicating. Some groups have actually found it necessary to acquire an office worker, like one person to do shit work regularly. I've gotten the impression sometimes that we're having fun playing in-the-name-of-the-revolution; that we can't stop ourselves from ignoring new faces around our centers because we're so busy with the phone and paper work.

Whose needs are being considered by publishing a movement paper? I guess I'm in a mood of the-audacity-we-have-to-be-so-flagrantly-privileged. Besides beating myself over the head for the privilege of putting out a paper, our audience also bothers me. Have we, and other papers, become inner-movement, full of heavy analysis and international news relevant to our beliefs but that no 'new' person can read? Or Chicano women or Black women or poor white women? Who will understand what I'm writing now? Who reads this paper? Are we competing with Rat and the Babe and other movement produced papers and magazines? Are they competing with us and each other? Why? Why?

Those of us that are old people in this movement sometimes get off at new people's meetings on the good things that are said. New people don't know it, usually, but they're describing and recognizing dimensions of sisterhood: an elusive term supposedly describing our relationship to each other. I think the needs of long-term movement people are, can, and will only be met through sisterhood. Not competition. Not administrativeness. Not regional elitism that makes me defensive and makes you hypocritical and makes us not sisters but competitors--and not even that in your eyes. Good feelings are coming out between us as we're disrupting social norms. Let it happen. Sisterhood is spreading! And I love it.

But I can't help thinking that many women, who do or don't read Ain't I A Woman?, wouldn't be very interested in what I feel about sisterhood, or care, for that matter, that it exists, when they have no tangible proof of it in their lives. And these same women also probably aren't interested in an analysis with all sorts of political points and heavy ideology that sounds preachy or do-this-do-that, which I don't feel has a place in a leaderless, collective movement anyway although it happens. So how are their old crutches being removed? What's taking the place of old feelings?

Should the women's liberation movement attempt to meet the needs of all women in it? Those of us who devote all our time and energy to it do need to be considered, I think. Yet I feel guilty because I get wrapped in our office work, in putting out the paper, in going to meetings, that I don't and wouldn't and haven't had time to rap with a woman who must have made the effort to find our office or our collective in order to talk with someone. We have a lot of things to talk about and try and work out, don't we?

Sometimes I feel like we've fought to get where we are in our movement---to do something fulfilling--without men. Then I see that I'm also doing things that men do in their world--like not really communicating personally to other women or taking the time to try when there is an opportunity to--an ego trip in the guise of a newspaper being put out at the disregard of that harder task.

Doesn't anyone else ever feel that way? Like we've set up our own culture, but that we're running it a little like the other? I feel it very strongly in things like competition, and elitism, coming down on married sisters, lesbians, hypocrisy in life style and ideology, feeling satisfied and actually happy in our work and collectives doing our thing to bring on the revolution. Maybe I don't belong in the Women's Liberation movement anymore.

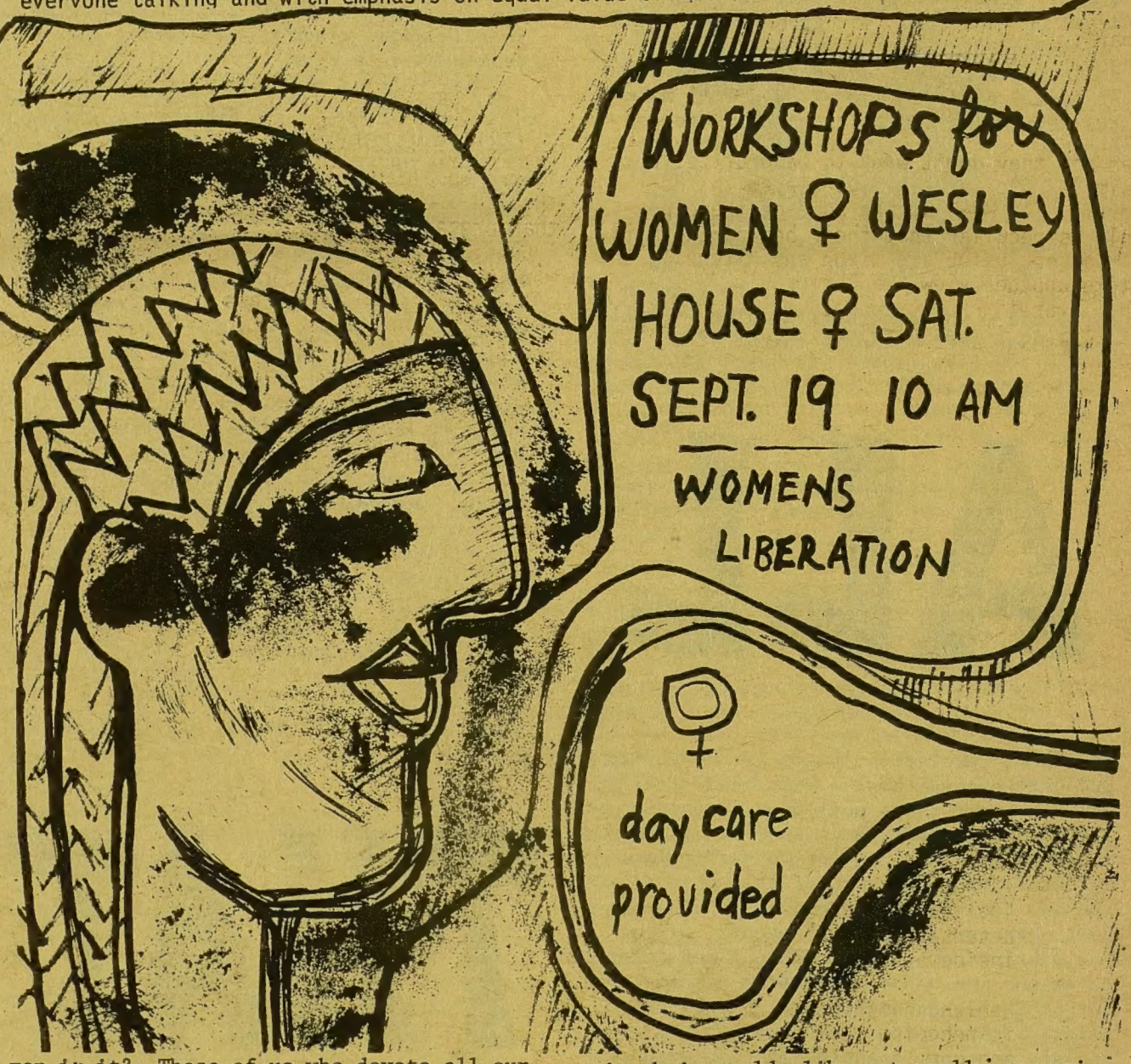
Self-Criticism

To make known the issues of women's liberation to the new students, Iowa City women's liberation front held two days of workshops entitled "Why Women's Liberation". The morning sessions were with everyone. We broke at noon and ate lunch together and split up into smaller discussion groups in the afternoon on topics like: marriage, women's attitudes toward women, men's attitudes toward women, women's liberation as a revolutionary movement, lesbian consciousness, and sisterhood. The first saturday's morning session was a beautiful success with both new and old people getting high from the experience. The second saturday's morning session was deeply depressing to me and unsuccessful in general.

The difference was the structure. In the morning session of the first saturday the theme was to be why women's liberation and we began by going around the room--everyone telling what they expected and wanted from women's liberation. The topic for the morning session of the second saturday was the issues that have been important in women's liberation. We began by having everyone tell their name and how long they'd been in women's liberation. Both the topic and the way in which the workshop began set the stage for an elitist discussion in which no new people could take part. The manner in which we began clearly pointed out who was new and who had been in women's liberation for a while with the implication that we therefore knew everything and so the new people started asking questions of us instead of talking themselves. The topic lent itself to old people talking too because what in hell do new people know about what we've been into when this is their first meeting.

In an internal workshop the next day we agreed that our structure had been poor. We decided from past experiences that the best way to begin a discussion meeting is to go around the room with everyone giving an answer to a question. The best kind of question is not one that points out the differences between people as the question we used to begin the second day of workshops did, but one that involves people in the discussion because they are giving their personal feelings about a subject. We've had good things happen with this. Like at one of our loving women internal workshops when we began by everyone telling what they love in women and then recently with the question 'what do you expect or want from women's liberation'. The unique thing about the last question was that people who had been involved in women's liberation for awhile got excited by it just as much as new people.

The most successful tactic for workshops still remains our circle discussions. Most newcomers have said they immediately feel part of the group and experience an atmosphere of friendly exchange of ideas; whereas the other political groups they've belonged to are competitive and hostile during discussions. Despite other possible failures of our workshops and discussions, we do make use of a positive encounter situation conducive to evervone talking and with emphasis on equal value of each woman's ideas.



Equality Under the Law
More Of The Same

COMMENTARY
THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT
by Ann Elizabeth

The passing of the Equal Rights Amendment in the House (after 47 years of resistance) is another interesting manifestation of a certain type of co-option. This one, however, is more complicated, than most.

First, on the issue of the draft. This amendment, if made part of the Constitution, is supposed to make women subject to the draft, and - as Frank Blair on NBC news put it so cunningly - make it possible for women to demand entrance into such schools as West Point (chuckle). But let us not forget that there is a great conspiracy afoot to do away with the draft. This great conspiracy is supported by an interesting cross-section of people - Mr. Nixon, Mr. Mitchell, various conservative groups, Reoublicans, Democrats, and oddly, a whole horde of anti-war proponents - men and women alike.

It looks as if, once again, they (males) will be successful in preventing women full participation in the war machine process. I firmly believe that the ERA and the drive to eliminate the draft system are related in this way: That the general abhorrence to making women draft prone will give impetus to Nixon's plan to do away with the draft and that many, many men and women who already want an end to the draft, will (should the ERA go through) push even harder to see it done. A large group of people seem to be thinking of the draft issue in a very short-sighted manner. The men (and now supposedly, women) don't want to go to Indo-China (an unjust war, etc.) and so they don't want to be drafted.Very simple conclusion.....do away with the draft. It MUST strike some of these people as peculiar that their bed-partners in this conclusion are Nixon and Mitchell. OK-take another view - a longer view: If U.S. foreign policy continues to be what it is, is it not absolutely mandatory that the U.S. public, men AND women, share the TOTAL responsibility of aggressions committed against other nations by our government? And is not that "sharing" involvement assured by the selective service system? To create another set of "professionals" is only another manifestation of the male route to status specialization. And in this case, the professionals would be well-paid, well-housed (according to Mitchell) troops (mercenaries), prepared to apply no individual social conscience to matters of killing, occupation, detention, torture, espionage, and so on. In other words - they would carry out the abstract objectives of our male-dominant government in concrete terms.

We MUST retain generalized public sanction over the military actions of federal authorities! One other side effect of doing away with the draft is that it would surely weaken the anti-war movement. The Pentagon people would have a carte blanche situation - which is just what they want.

We should also examine the draft issue from a view of the right of women to bear arms - which to this day his virtually been denied to us. This right is integral with the right to self-defense. In light of the violence mystique that exists in our culture (and the fact that we are so vulnerable and subject to it), we should welcome any opportunity to acquire education in self-defense tactics - including military training and participation. And we must be given the opportunity to RESIST oppression in a meaningful way - not only in matters of individual self-protection, but in a political context, the opportunity to say "hell, no, we won't go" and have it be EFFECTIVE.

The second most-debated aspect of the ERA is the doing away with so-called "protective laws". Quoting from Joan Jordan: "The removal of beneficial legislation will not insure equality but rather increase profits through greater exploitation and inequality than presently exists."

Consider the fact that nationally, 80% of working women are NOT organized. Therefore without any protective laws and no work contracts, they would be totally subjugated to the whim of unscrupulous employers.

Many of the protective work laws came into being through very hard-fought battles -- laws concerning limitations on working hours, overtime, break periods, lifting excessive weights, cleanliness, good ventilation, adequate lighting, decent restroom facilities. We must not push these laws aside and contend simply that they oppress women workers. While it's true that some of these laws have been unjustly applied to prevent women from securing certain types of employment -- the protective benefits derived from these laws are generally valid, and necessary to all employees - male and female alike. The obvious political thrust should be not to remove these laws but to EXTEND them to include the male work force. At the same time, women must demand a reduced work day and week as they organize. If our movement looks forward to creating a more humane society, the above certainly outlines the most logical political thinking of women concerning labor.

It may be that the ERA will serve our purposes in the courts and will prove forceful in helping women to enter areas of now male-dominated employment - but beware the co-option dilemma! Don't be easily pacified by this crumb of egalitarianism! It's very possible that the ERA will have only the most minimal effect on ACTUAL opportunities for women. Witness the 1963 Equal Pay Act; the 1964 Title VII Sex Amendment; the 1954 Supreme Court Decision on integration. There is a rather extensive list on Congressional books of laws dealing with the condition of women and civil rights. The female population continues to move backward economically and the Blacks are battling on all fronts ... in spite of these laws! Laws are valid only when the courts enforce them - and we've seen little evidence of strong enforcement of laws concerning women and Blacks ... and other minority groups.

Do you support the ERA? Why? Are you prepared to enforce it? - to coerce the courts to enforce it? - to go to the streets to do battle to enforce it? Are you prepared to accept (to demand) participation in the military and thusly secure fuller participation in our government? Are you ready for the employer who will require you to work a 12 hour day with no overtime? *Or will the ERA stand as another* bit of lip-service paperwork? Be reminded also that 38 states must ratify this amendment before it becomes part of Constitutional law.

It looks good - but it's a pretty complicated hassle.

Reprinted from the Female Liberation Newsletter, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Feeling only human
I picked myself up
Feeling human
is like a second,
lost y'r balance,
that's alright

Feeling human
seems to be getting
more difficult
(plastic coughing)

Feeling human is
a sensation
inside a crowd

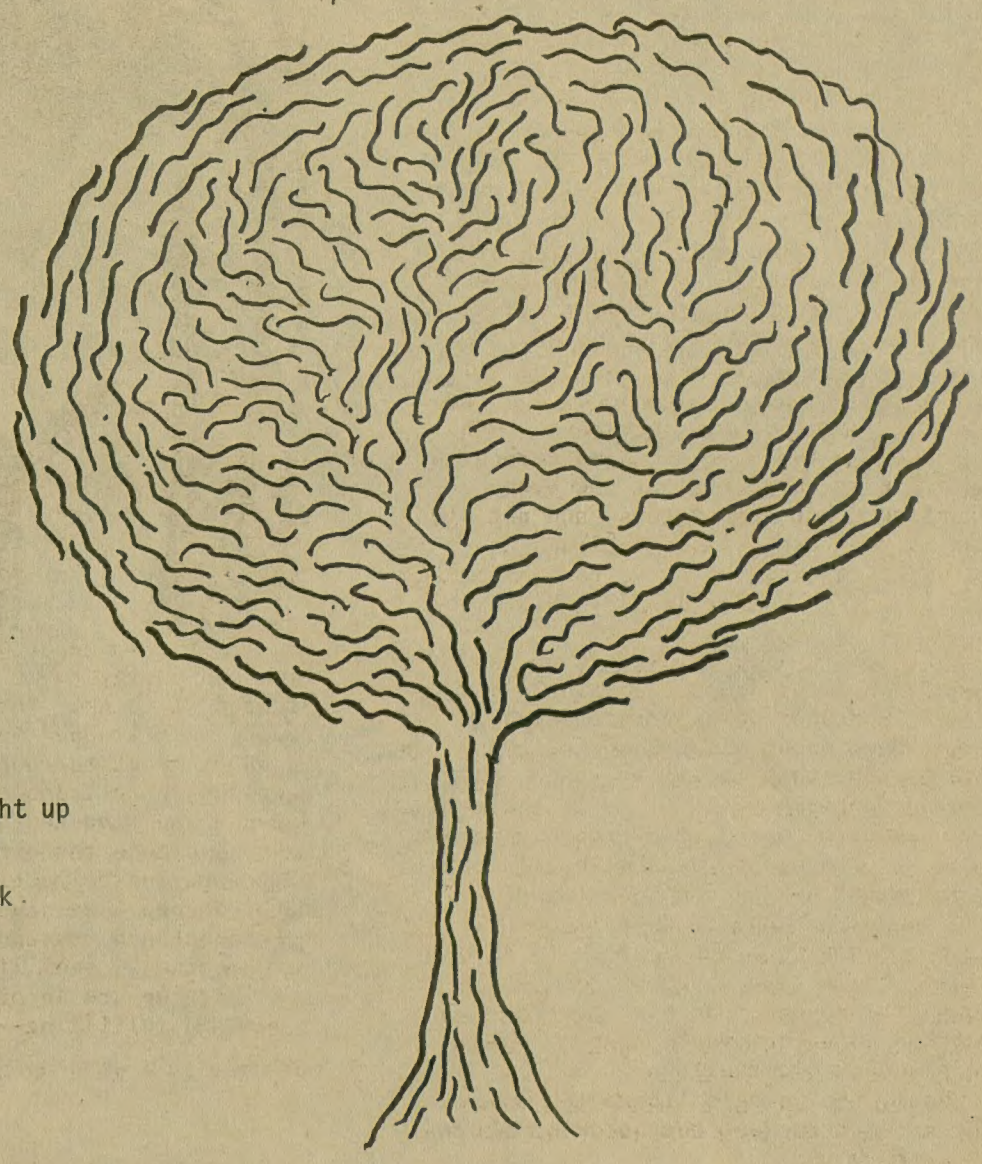
Feeling human
is becoming more
and more troublesome
and that's just when
we stop thinking about it

and fall out of this
writer's tree
at my mother's words

She is well sort of
screaming, all worked up
like hysterical

While I sit up here
angrily denouncing
her Republicans

she is too wrought up
to care who wins
she is hurt and
all she can think
is suffering
and she cries,
Be human.



NATURE

HOW BEING FEMALE HELPS IN UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE QUESTION:

As my "Earth Week" reading I picked up Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (in keeping with a policy of giving female authors priority). This book deals with the problem of chemical poisoning of the environment, specifically from pesticides and herbicides, and those who have been irresponsible in advocating chemical usage without bothering about the consequences. One could, of course, cite this book as further support for the radical position. In fact, when the radical movement does give attention to the question of ecology, all too often attempts are made merely to buttress the existing radical line. In other words, we have political and economic analysis aplenty, but the question of how we relate to nature is never raised. (Does that sound familiar?--Radicals are quick to analyse how to relate to the capitalistic power structure,etc., but never deal with the question of how to relate to women.)

Rachel Carson was a naturalist, and in a very poetic way she suggests that the way we should relate to nature is by coming to understand nature on Nature's terms - by learning how nature actually works and not superimposing our hasty conclusions. For example, she suggests that instead of rushing to laboratories to cook up a new chemical weapon, the best way to deal with agricultural pests or whatever lies in getting to know that particular organism and in finding out how it relates to the natural scheme, then introducing natural controls - nature provides more efficient ways of control than man in his laboratories without all the drastic consequences. We get our clues by getting to know nature better. *That is really a mind-blowing concept!* Instead of imposing upon nature, we relate to her as she is!

Isn't that similar to what we are struggling with as females? Isn't the root of our "coming to consciousness" a realization that we don't know what our real needs are- or even who we really are - because these things have been defined for us by men? Isn't our struggle for liberation ultimately the desire to be ourselves - to be a real and a total self, not just a half-self, or an "other"-self, a self defined and thus controlled by men.

For some women, liberation means putting aside the makeup, hair bleaches, girdles, and all those other gimmicks for forcing ourselves into a stereotyped image of the "pretty female" - an image which oppresses us, and makes us anxious because we at best achieve only imitations of that image and thus remain forever insecure. We have been alienated from our own natural selves and thus we spend untold energy and emotion in attempting to remake our faces and figures into a superimposed ideal.

For some of us, liberation means meeting our own sexual interest, finding sexual satisfaction on female terms in our female bodies, rather than always and only defining sexual activity in terms of male interest. We want to be freed from the myth of vaginal orgasm. from all forms of prostitution (including marital), and from being "punished" for sex by having to bear children. We want to be sexually ourselves.

We are already well into the problem of finding out who we really are, rejecting male definitions of ourselves. In fact, we are questioning the whole male mentality - we see its brutality, its corruption all too well. We should likewise question the male attitude toward and definition of nature. If we no longer accept the existing male assessment of ourselves, then we should likewise suspect the existing male approach toward nature. That's what got us into all this environment trouble anyway. We should begin to view nature directly, without looking through male viewpoints.

For some of us, liberation means obtaining intellectual and creative fulfillment - after all, our brains are part of our natural body. We are tired of being dealt with merely as sex objects and not as total persons. We are angered at being forced to spend all our time in menial work - whether typing, washing diapers, or whatever - and of being totally alienated or deprived from any mental stimulation or opportunity for growth and fulfillment. We want to be mentally ourselves.

For some of us, liberation means being able to meet the most basic physical needs- having food to eat, a bed to sleep in. For other women this means freeing physical bodies from the chain of perpetual childbirth.

reprinted from It Ain't Me Babe

HOW DEALING WITH ECOLOGY CAN HELP US AS FEMALES:

The very term "ecology" refers to the totality of the pattern of interrelationships between organisms and their environment. Nature operates in a series of relationships. Food chains are one example of this - the minnow eats plankton, the big fish eats the minnow, the gull eats the big fish, and so forth - and if you wipe out one link in the chain, you ruin the whole show. Our own bodies are another example - bacteria and other organisms live in ambiotic relationship, helping to digest our food and thus enabling our own survival. To focus attention upon any one organism in isolation is to fail to understand that organism - for every organism exists in relationship to others. Relationship, that's the key.

Instinctively, perhaps, we women are organizing ourselves into groups - the small group pattern. We are realizing that part of man's secret for controlling us has been to divide us, to alienate us, to make us compete with each other. As a result, we each feel isolated and alone - unique in our individual problems - and it has driven us to the point of hysteria. We're beginning to deal with that, to support each other, to think in more communal terms. Sisterhood is really a beautiful idea - sisterhood speaks of women relating to each other.

But sisters don't exist in isolation either. Emotional support is essential, coming to consciousness is necessary - but women's liberation can't stop there. We hit this, of course, whenever we try to deal with any of the "practical" issues - childcare, economic independence from men, control over our own bodies. For many of us, the "web" of interdependencies has become all too literal, and we're trapped. Sometimes it seems as though we can't even get one single childcare center open, much less overturn the whole economic structure which oppresses us, or depose the male supremacist power elite - or whatever hands are manipulating the strings behind the strings. Sometimes the whole thing seems impossible. After all, we women have been told we can't handle anything very complex. We have only simple, childlike minds and are incapable of really understanding things in their totality.

Perhaps our clue can come from nature. While man has been arrogantly fucking over the earth, blithely spraying his chemicals here and detonating his missiles there, nature has been involved in reweaving the whole fabric of natural relationships - weaving man right out of the pattern. So too while old supremacist, racist, imperialist, arrogant Man is sitting high on his throne, we shall be busy weaving a whole new pattern of relationships among people - and shall leave the Man out of it. And sisters, weaving is a feminine art!

We shall survive and we shall be free.

Helps build strong bodies 12 ways!

"Man has treated Nature and all people he considers weaker than himself exactly as he has treated woman... as an object to be oppressed, suppressed,repressed, subjugated and used up. Why else do ecologists so commonly refer to the 'rape of the land'? Why else is the act of rape always the culmination,the proof and the symbol of the conquerors sucess in war." from OFF OUR BACKS

This rape by man of "Mother Earth", the use of our bodies for his experimentation is another example of an exploitative economic system where the concern is profits and expansion, the drive is the frontier ethic, pioneering, striving for more and better-ego fulfillment and individual monetary gains. His self-destructive thrust, (which threatens our survival as well), is toward excessive production, waste, growth for its own sake, poverty for the masses and destruction of the air, sea, soil and organisms that are the basis of the life-support system.

All people should be clothed, fed, housed decently, with adequate health care. This is impossible if our food resources are contaminated, our factories give off noxious and poisoned chemicals affecting the products that we use and our cities are crumbling and polluted.
The purpose of these articles is to examine the political relationship of the womans revolution and all third world peoples to the ecological crisis -to examine nutritionally how we are being exploited and what we can do about it.

Politically-why the capitalistic system encourages pollution(contamination of the environment that interferes with life processes).
Pollution is a by-product of a government which responds best to the greatest economic power-INDUSTRY- and not at all to the people.
example-for the capitalist the cost of the wastes he discharges into the river is less than the cost of purifying his wastes before releasing them.
result- approximately eight million people drink water with bacteriological content that exceeds the limit of US Public Health Service Drinking Water Standards.
comment- "It would be the ultimate cop-out to give all our money to the Black Panthers and have them all die in 20 years because they couldn't drink the water"-EARTH TIMES
example- antibiotic and arsenicals are put into the feed of cattle and poultry because it effects their growth and efficiency-female estrogen hormones are also added as a growth stimulant that really only adds useless fat and water.
In every year you eat 3 pounds of intentional additives with your meals.
An additive found commonly in baby foods is sodium nitrate, used to preserve and produce the pink color in cured meats. Nitrates reduce the bloods clotting abilty to carry oxygen from the lungs to the babies tissues. Ascorbic acid is also found in baby foods-which makes sodium nitrate nore potent. There may be some relationship between food and the more than 20,000 crib deaths that occur annually where a parent puts a child to bed and then finds the baby dead some time later for as yet unexplained reasons.
Or white bread- the most valuable nutrients were milled out of the flour, that it was chemically aged, chemically bleached, the dough treated with chemical softeners and preservatives to make it appear fresh, the starchy remains dosed with 3 to 4 synthetic vitamins to replace some 25 nutrients that were removed and that the bread was then sold to you as an "enriched" product. Its illegal to "enrich" bread in Canada where this practice is recognized as a fraud of the consumer.

Dr. Ryan, editor of the Dental Digest said "everytime a natural substance is removed from a food, everytime an adulterant is added to a food the balance in nature is disturbed.... the chemical and cellular processes within the body cells cannot react to the passing whims of chemists without disturbances in its functions. It took thousands of years for the body to adjust itself to changing environmental conditions. When suddenly these conditions are altered by the actions of men the cells cannot make the adjustment- disease is the result."

Consumers are the guinea pigs of big business. They use chemicals to produce more food than can be use in their markets, sacrificing quality to quantity. Then the surplus must be stored at tremendous cost.To keep it from being devoured by insects it must be basted with powerful poisons. The best part of the wheat is removed, fed to animals and to what remains are added synthetic vitamins to make up for the removed nutrients and called "enriched". And then millions of dollars are spent to make up for the nutritional deficiencies of food.

These are examples of man's waste and misuse of natural resources for profit, while millions are starving, indicative of his exploitation and lack of regard for people, and with no conscience about the eventual consequences of his actions.

The health of the workers is another consideration. The dusty trades- mining and grinding, were historically related to chest disease. Mercury, arsenic and lead are still in industrial use. Solvents, plastics, resins, lasers, etc and more than 10,0000 chemical and physical agents in use involve hazards to the workers who have to handle them. Over 75,860,000 lbs of organophosphates (commonly called nerve gas) were produced in Amerika in 1968. This causes tremors, muscular spasm, convulsions and deaths. There are many incidences of workers in the fields being sprayed or becoming contaminated with the poisons they are forced to use.

The Amerikan ideal- Competition- means Exploitation. Exploit Vietnam- and dump these chemicals on their soil, so that the women there too have to bear malformed children, miscarry or become sterile.

When you destroy part of the environment you are destroying part of yourself.

"Che made the very important point that the society you're going to build is already reflected in the nature of the struggle that you're carrying out. And one of the most important things in relationship to that is the building of a collective spirit, getting away from this individualistic orientation toward personal salvation, personal involvement.... One of the most important things that has to be done in the process of carrying out a revolutionary struggle is to merge these two different levels, to merge the personal with the political where they're no longer separate.
What people have to start doing is to build that collective spirit. To overcome that notion of bourgeois individuality which separated one person from the next and which defines the individual as someone who can assert himself at the expense of his brother by destroying his brother."
-ANGELA DAVIS

By refusing to eat the pig shit that industry is handing us is one way of recognizing our sisterhood, our collectivity. The pollution problem goes beyond the middle class, because ultimately every person is acutely affected by the poisons he is injesting into his system.

Its true that there are all sorts of ways to destroy people short of killing their bodies. Sexist,racist, imperialistic Amerika has been using a slow poison and we must stop it now.
(next article on alternatives.)

NEWSLETTER
Women's Liberation
Kansas City, Missouri

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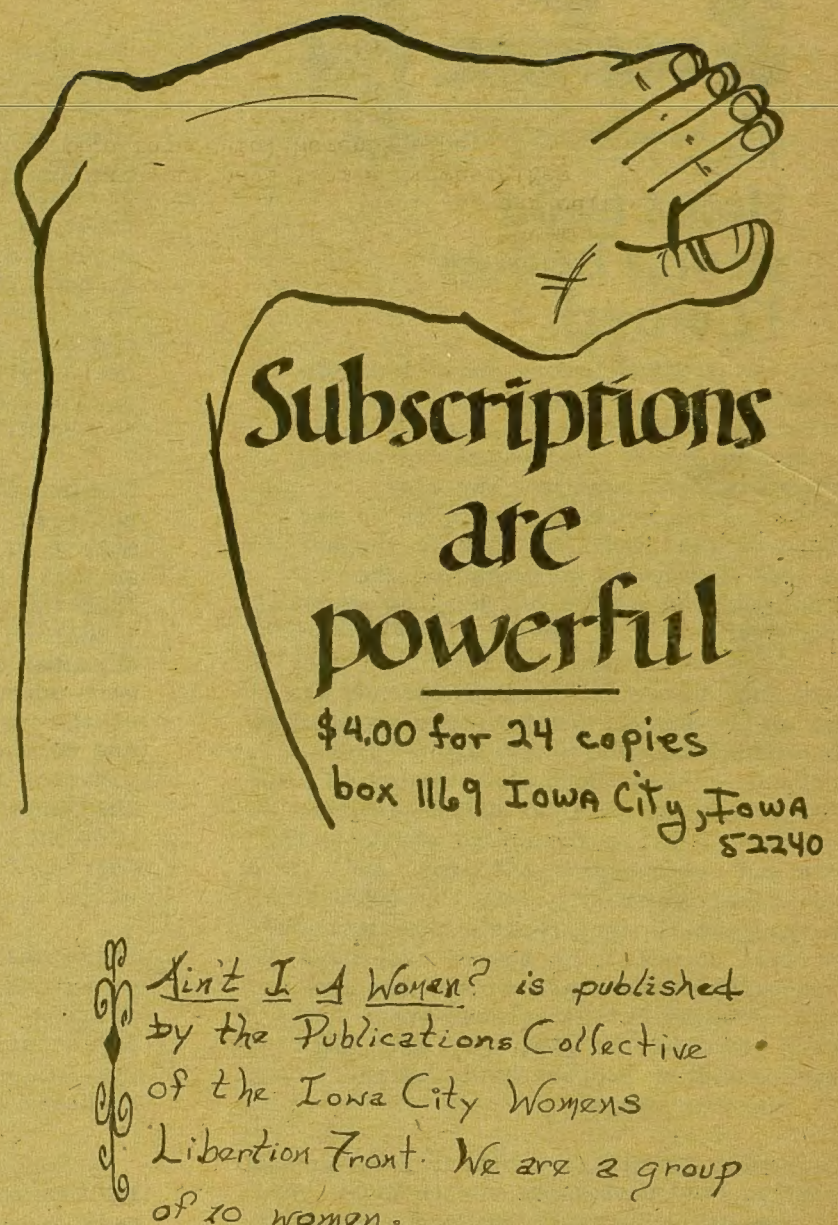
64111

WHERE WE'VE BEEN...

During this first year, a core group of a dozen women have met weekly, trying to "get it together." At first, the time was spent concentrating on the design and development of a slide and tape show to be used in raising the issues of Women's Liberation. This has been used to speak to more than thirty groups in the city and nearby towns. Involvement in the planning for a Day-Care Center at UMKC and participation in a group to deal with women with unwanted pregnancies, formed the main thrust of action undertaken by the group. Two six-weeks study sessions were held in the spring and some new women were reached in this way. A very active group emerged on the East side made up of women students and seminary wives. This group planned and sponsored an intensive three-day school-wide event, using national and local resource persons. Finally, in May, seven women attended a regional Women's Liberation Conference in Mississippi sponsored by the Southern Female Rights Conference.

WHERE WE ARE NOW...

We have been struggling! In June, the group spent a whole day evaluating the past year. In some ways, there seemed to be little progress. It was hoped that many small groups would be organized and going strong by now. BUT there have been scores of contacts made and some of these women are beginning to call in and seem ready to go. We have been sending out literature constantly filling orders from all over the United States. There is now a Women's Liberation Office (in the Ecstatic Umbrella, 3800 Magee) complete with telephone (756-0843). We are being approached frequently now for statements and interviews by area newspapers and local talk shows. There has been a proposal submitted for a WOMEN'S CENTER with hope of expanding in that direction. We have had two seminars this summer (topics: sexuality, Woman as Consumer and Commodity), providing an open forum for any interested women who want to question, probe or become involved. We are now in the process of organizing the files, the resource materials and making personal contacts with individual women. Finally, we have re-grouped ourselves in "areas of interest" to provide the broadest range of options for women who want to become involved in the Movement. Therefore, we come to the next part...



Ain't I A Woman? is published by the Publications Collective of the Iowa City Womens Libertion Front. We are a group of 10 women.

Sisters Take a Stand

Elsa Gidlow

In February the Second Bay Area Women's Coalition Conference brought together a dozen or more groups and organizations concerned with different aspects of women's liberation. About 200 women participated. The age spread appeared to be from teens to seventies, with the majority probably in their twenties and thirties. . . .

Of particular interest was the late afternoon panel discussion of lesbianism with representatives of NOVA, DOB, and Gay Women's Liberation participating. This inclusion on the program was an advance over the first Caucus held last autumn when lesbians were kept invisible so far as the program was concerned. . .

The lesbian panel climaxing the Conference's afternoon session . . . proved to be highly dramatic. More than one woman avowedly "straight" said she found the frank talks of the panelists and subsequent audience interchange the profoundest part of the program. . . .

Closing her talk, Alice Malloy said, " I was going to do something here, but was told it might not be advisable." As she paused and smiled over her audience one could sense a feeling of expectation: the women present wished her to go on. After a silence, Alice said, "I'll tell you what I had in mind and leave it to you. I was going to ask if every woman in the hall who had ever felt she could be erotically attracted to another woman would care to stand up."

After the electric statement the silence was tensely felt. Several women stood. A few more slowly followed. Then, like a dam bursting, practically every woman of the 200 or so in the hall was on her feet. Since the majority undoubtedly thought of themselves as "straight" and were living heterosexual lives, this could be seen as an expression of acceptance and sisterly solidarity, beautiful in its spontaneity. Perhaps also it was something of a group confession, for the atmosphere of relief was evident, and reflected in the frank give-and-take of the platform-audience interchange that followed. . ..

reprinted from WOMEN, Sum. '70

Dear Women and Sisters

Some Cleveland women were involved in an action on August 26. We have gotten together a short summary and hope to follow later with an analysis but are sending this now so that perhaps it will reach you in time for your next issue.

"Is this a talent show or Women's Liberation," was shouted to the people at the August 26 celebration on the Mall in Cleveland as seven Women's Liberationists in white face and several others took the stage from the chauvinist band enthroned there.

The original program which had been planned by women's rights groups had been shortened from a series of five minute speeches by women costumed as suffragettes to two minute speeches because Al Russ and orchestra wanted to play longer selections of sexist music ("Never on Sunday").

Master of Ceremonies, WJW announcer Carl Reese, agreed to let the women speak for five minutes but wrestled for control of the mike, muttering "Have you ever been stepped on?" to the women around him.

One of the women told the people "We're judged by the shape of our legs, whether or not we have hair on our legs, whether we wear mini's or maxi's, by our bodies not our minds. If you think minds are more important than bodies and people are more important than clothes, come to the back of the Mall."

The women left the stage area and proceded to the rear of the Mall followed by a large portion of the crowd. They performed an original skit showing the stereotypes of women--a little girl ("Aren't I pretty?"), a highschool woman ("I wanted to take chemistry but I guess typing is more important."), a college woman ("I just got engaged"), housewife ("I'm just a household drudge"), waitress ("Don't pinch!), secretary ("If I'm here 25 years, I'll still be a secretary") and freak ("When the heavy shit comes down, I'm still just a chick.").

Cleveland Women
% Peggy
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If your group wants to receive bundles of AIN'T I A WOMAN?, send 15¢ per copy. Minimum bundle: 20 copies

The voice of the Midwest needs to be heard in the Women's Liberation Movement. Ain't I A Woman? will print without editing any laid-out page from a Midwest (New Mexico thru Ohio) Women's Liberation group. We would like to encourage other women to start working collectively to avoid elitism and destructive power relationships that pit us against each other. We will send details on deadlines, page size, column length, etc. if you would like.

AIN'T I A WOMAN? is published on the second and fourth Fridays of each month by the Publications Collective of the Iowa City Women's Liberation Front, P.O. Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240